Rome 7th June 1874

My dear Marcia

'Tis long since we had a chat & I am anxious to hear how you are - you wrote me 14th april, telling me of my Walter meeting the Andersons at Cairo

You'll have been shocked at the death of my dear Claudia, altho' 'tis so long she had been lingering in great suffering, how fortunate her 2 eldest daughters are now grown up, the eldest being of age & can take the management of the family

Claudia was an angel in goodness & certainly met with great good fortune in her marriage, for Tilgale is an excellent good creature & she was very happy & with every comfort - I think the daughters will be well to do, as well as they can be without their mother & such a mother

until now we have been sadly plagued with bad weather, sleet and rain & cold!!, but now the Spring is divine & I am not only painting but have actually sold a small picture, which is the chief merit of my art & which I regret to say is with me a very rare merit

How fortunate I am not to have to depend on my painting for a living in my old age, in my 80th year, yet my sight is still excellent & my hand steady as ever, so I go on daubing & do not think of the chance of sale - for the Roman encouragement has come to an end & looks as tho' 'twould never rise again. - For Rome no longer attracts the crowd of Foreigners, as the crop Pope will not do the splendid ceremonies, which no doubt were the great charm of Rome - also expenses have so doubled & trebled that this is also

and such reason

I am glad to tell you that at last the "Aqua Marcia" is to pay interest at 5 per cent next October & thus my scanty income will be encreased some £50 a year, which will be a comfort to me as regard Cabs, for I can walk well in the nice places but I cannot walk to them — so I ramble some 2 hours nearly every day & then cab it back, but I am obliged to be sparing as the two cabs cost me half a crown & I cannot come it more than twice a week which is hard upon me — but now I'll do it otherwise

This rambling has done me great good & also my painting, for I now well set up, but the news of poor dear Claudia sadly affected my nerves & for more than a week I could scarcely walk, for you see at my age any thing upsets me

[illegible] our dear Father
[illegible] for [illegible] tribute
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] how
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
dear good father was really an honest man - It is a
pleasure to me to review my past life for there are so
many points to give me present delight - no doubt I
was gifted with a fine genius but the drawbacks
were serious yet in reviewing the standing & career
of other artists all with a better beginning than mine
I cannot find one who has done so much - And yet I
am not satisfied - at times I ought to have done so
much more - Now I dare say the like thoughts occur
to you about yourself for there is much resemblance
twixt us & I am proud of you - Where I showed
skill was on the failure of my painting (for I went out
of fashion) that I made a clash at the Consulate &
was saved by it & never got the 2 pensions - For my
Art would not have kept me owing to the change in
Rome & I must have dropped off in misery - Certainly
my few friends have been very faithfull to me - Gladstone
particularly - The influence of fashion in Art took me
by surprise & dropped me, yet luckily I was equal
to other things & have settled down in quiet repose &
may have some of my best works yet, for my eyesight is
excellent my hand steady & my impudence great

Your loving brother Joe